



Please accept this letter as our statement of opposition to the October 27, 2004, Petition for Forbearance filed by BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc.

The Internet has experienced explosive growth in its short time of existence. This growth has benefited the population of consumers the FCC is mandated to protect. The ILECs, BellSouth included, have a verifiable history of slowing growth and technological advancement. The product that was the internet 10 short years ago barely resembles the product that is the internet today. The fuel for this growth, change, and adaptation to benefit the population has been the openness of the internet as required by rules governing the ILEC's networks. The product that was the telephone system 10 years ago barely differs from the product that it is today. What new and exciting technologies have the Bell's developed for a technology centric society? Where is our video phone so that I as a consumer can see my children as I tell them good night while away on business? The three single largest advancements in the telephone industry are caller ID, caller name and number ID, and tone dialing. Given that broadband is driving the current growth of the internet, it would be a tragedy to place the tudor of the current telephone infrastructure in such a position of power to dictate who can do what over their broadband connection. The drastic slow down of innovation would do great damage to consumers.

BellSouth must demonstrate that the Computer Inquiry and Title II common-carriage requirements are not necessary to ensure that the charges and practices for broadband services "are just and reasonable and are not unjustly or unreasonably discriminatory". An examination of BellSouth's current practices demonstrates their profiteering motives and eagerness to make as much money as possible on a product regardless of the cost of the product, or the harm to the consumer. Take caller-id as an example. Basic caller-id, i.e. not name and number, just number, cost the telephone company nothing to deliver. Every class 5 voice switch manufactured in the last 15 years supports delivery of the calling party's number. There is no fee paid for each phone call and caller id number the Bell companies deliver to a consumer over and above any fees required to deliver that call with out caller-id. Yet, for this costless service, the BellSouth charges well over \$ 5.00 / month in Louisiana. The pillaging of consumers must not be allowed to extend by creating yet another monopolized market.

Yet another arena BellSouth continues to maintain inflated pricing on is the DS1 (T1) market. The pricing for DS1's has not decreased over the last five years, and has actually increased. There is no competition, and the hardware required to produce a DS1 as a service has decreased in cost tremendously. There is no economic reason for BellSouth to continue the current DS1 pricing structure, in fact, there are many economic reasons to lower the pricing structure as the equipment required to produce and maintain it as decreased in cost. This is in contrast to broadband pricing which has steadily fallen over the past 5 years. Once again, consumers are left in the dark and not allowed to benefit from the lowered delivery cost of this service.



BellSouth claims there is ample competition in the broadband market. This is a farce. Where is the competition in Franklinton, Louisiana. The cable tv system doesn't currently support broadband deployment over cable. The following cities are example of locations that are without competition in the broadband arena albeit via DSL entities such as ourselves that utilize the product BellSouth is requesting forbearance on : Angie, Louisiana, Bogalusa, Louisiana, Varnado, Louisiana, and Pine, Louisiana. Consumers in these areas would be greatly harmed by lack of choice if their choices for broadband access were reduced to one entity.

In conclusion, if forbearance is granted, the power to remove consumers choice will be placed in the hands of the ILECs, which are the same group of companies that quit developing new products with the advent of tone dialing, call waiting and caller ID andt he same group of companies that would be happy if VOIP died the same death as BETA. Consumers choice will be harmed, thus consumers will be harmed. I plead with the commissioners both as a consumer and as someone heavily vested in the ISP business, do not grant forbearance, or as my grandfather would say "Don't entrust the wolves with the safety of the chicken coupe".